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ABSTRACT

The United States policy of branding governments--especially those in developing nations--as "good guys" or "bad guys" has been costly. The price has been paid in lost lives, confrontations with the Soviet Union, loss of diplomatic flexibility, and domestic political stresses. It seems an opportune time, now that the United States is moving toward a more confrontational foreign policy, to examine past practices and policies toward radical regimes and, if possible, develop a strategy to deal with radical regimes. The following comparative case study discussions are also included: Cuba and China; Libya and Algeria, Mossadeq and Khomeini, Nicaragua and Zimbabwe, and Angola and Mozambique. A number of suggestions emerged from the conference; most of these touched upon United States political culture. All participants agreed that the "task-force mentality"--the tendency to view events from a short-term perspective and to expect results overnight--must be adjusted. The group also agreed that not enough attention has been paid to the situations and priorities of the regimes labelled as radical. (BZ)

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US Policy and Radical Regimes

Vantage Conference 1986

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US Policy and Radical Regimes

Report of a Vantage Conference

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Regional experts, foreign policy generalists, and policymakers convened at Coolfont Conference Center in Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.

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Richard H. Stanley
President, The Stanley Foundation

About the Conference

Vantage conferences bring together experts and policymakers for candid discussions of important and timely issues. Our subject for this conference was "US Policy and Radical Regimes." *Radical* is a difficult term to define and one which carries many connotations and nuances – most of them negative. A big part of the problem has been the lack of a consistent US policy toward what are often arbitrarily labeled radical regimes. What do we mean by radical? When and why do we apply that label to governments?

The US policy of branding governments – especially those in the Third World – as "good guys" or "bad guys" has been costly. The price has been paid in lives lost, confrontations with the Soviet Union, loss of diplomatic flexibility, and domestic political stresses. It has become apparent that the United States is moving toward a more confrontational stance in the Third World. It seems an opportune time to examine our past practices and policies toward radical regimes.

The objectives of this conference were to do just that: examine past US policy toward radical regimes; identify common elements, noting their strengths and weaknesses; and if possible, develop a strategy, or elements of a strategy, to deal with radical regimes.

The conference discussions and the rapporteur's report confirmed our belief that this is a timely and important subject, yet one that is extremely complex. We added to the complexity by bringing together regional experts, foreign policy generalists, and policymakers. Our goal was to identify common experiences and characteristics from each of these disciplines and to begin to forge a consensus for the future on US policy toward radical regimes.

Helen Kitchen, Conference Chair

Gillian Gunn, Rapporteur

Conference Report

US Policy and Radical Regimes

US policymakers' preoccupation with characterizing Third World governments by the extent to which they agree with US interests and concerns has made re-examination of the entire issue of Third World radicalism a timely exercise. How do policymakers define "radicalism," and how should it be defined? How does a moderate or a proven friend become a radical? Are all radical regimes necessarily threats to the United States? What can be learned from past experience in dealing with such governments? How do radical regimes differ? Is confrontation with radical regimes avoidable? Finally, are there any guidelines that can be developed for formulating US policy toward such governments?

Defining a Radical Regime

The definition of radical regime, what one might have thought would be the easiest part of the conference, turned out to be the greatest challenge. The fact that consensus was so difficult to achieve, however, was in itself informative. If a small and relatively homogeneous group of academics, current and former diplomats, journalists, and businessmen could not easily arrive at a definition, it is not surprising that an institution as large and diverse as the US government does not speak with consistency on the issue.

The participants gathered at Coolfont agreed that, in its purest sense, the word *radical* means "going to the root" of an issue. This formulation draws on some of Webster's dictionary variations: "of or from the root

The rapporteur prepared this report following the conference. Participants neither reviewed nor approved the report; therefore it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all recommendations, observations, and conclusions.

or roots, going to the foundation or source of something, fundamental, basic, favoring fundamental or extreme change." They also agreed, however, that radical has taken on a number of other nuances in the formulation of US foreign policy.

Most participants agreed that the policy community tends to attribute certain characteristics to radical regimes: for example, hostility to the sanctity of private property and to the international capitalist order, repression of religion, a close relationship with the Soviet Union, and a foreign policy hostile to the interests of the United States. There was agreement that:

— the closer a state is to the United States in geographical terms, the more likely it is that radical developments will be perceived as a threat;
— decisionmakers often apply the term radical to any new Third World government with which the United States has tried but failed to establish a good working relationship; and
— policymakers often fail to distinguish radical rhetoric from radical behavior.

While there was general consensus on the highly subjective criteria the US government is inclined to use in defining the term, no decision was reached on how radical **should** be defined by policymakers. All agreed that the dictionary definition of radical as "of or from the root," while accurate as far as it went, was not sufficient. Some participants argued that hostility toward private property and religion should be the main criteria. Others pointed out that this would exclude Khomeini's Iran, which most participants thought should be categorized as radical. The view that governments with close links to the Soviet Union are radical was countered with the reminder that India, which none of the participants placed in the radical category, has a close relationship with Moscow. The suggestion that only those governments with foreign policies hostile to the United States should be considered radical, regardless of their internal systems, ran up against the case of China. If a tendency toward antidemocratic, totalitarian governmental style were accepted as a hallmark of radicalism, would not Pinochet's Chile have to be classified as radical? If radical describes a process directed at changing the existing order rather than a stable state, where does this place countries such as Cuba that have institutionalized their new character?

Given all these problems, some participants asked, how useful is the radical label? Because it is emotive, is generally perceived as pejorative, is subject to varying definitions, and often makes US policy rigid and inflexible, might it best be dispensed with entirely?

US Record in Dealing with Radical Regimes

The suggestion was made that the United States' own revolutionary

history initially encouraged identification with revolutions against oppression. Their own struggle against a colonial power gave Americans a sense of fraternal solidarity with movements facing similar battles that lasted throughout the nineteenth century. Indeed, early leaders believed that the emergence of a "new world" of republican states was vital to the security of the US revolution. The favorable attitude of the US public and leaders such as Jefferson and Madison toward the French Revolution is one of the earliest examples of this. Similar outbursts of enthusiasm occurred when challenges developed to Spanish rule in South America in the 1820s, to the old order in Greece in 1830, and to the status quo in Hungary in 1848. Important elements of the US political vocabulary, such as the nobility of "fighting for freedom" and "against tyranny," trace their roots to this period. One of the ironies mentioned was that revolutionaries whom the United States has opposed in recent decades – notably Ho Chi Minh – used language drawn from the Declaration of Independence.

A Shift in US Attitude

The urge to embrace new governments that upset the status quo, it was suggested, changed at the turn of the century. Two arguments were put forward as to why this happened: First, with the rise of Bolshevism in Russia in 1917, anticapitalist ideas began to be embraced by revolutionaries. Since the United States was by then an emerging capitalist power, this inevitably brought such revolutions into conflict with Washington. Second, once the United States went from being a small power challenging the status quo, and glad of support from fellow challengers, to itself being a status quo power, it felt threatened by change. A third view, strongly held by some participants, was that the United States never truly supported revolution, even during its early history. It was also noted that President Reagan is reembracing the early US rhetoric on revolution and using it to justify supporting "freedom fighters" attempting to topple Third World governments that Americans at the right of the US political spectrum perceive as communist dictatorships. Because such rhetoric touches a historical chord, it has powerful political appeal.

Another historical characteristic of the United States noted at the conference was its tendency to swing between engagement in world affairs and isolationism. The isolationist impulse, it was suggested, predominated before World War II, while the postwar period has been marked by engagement approaching immersion. Ronald Reagan was cited as the first president to reconcile these two contradictory trends in US foreign policy. The drive to build a Star Wars defense that would recreate in space the buffer the Atlantic Ocean once provided was seen as symbolic of the isolationist dimension. Simultaneously, Washington is immersing itself in world affairs through aid to contras and freedom fighters in Afghanistan, Angola, Nicaragua, and perhaps elsewhere.

Defining radical regimes proved a difficult task. (Lowenkopf, Gutman, Bender)

In the discussion of case studies, two conflicting views were put forward. The first was that in the forty years since it became a global superpower, the United States has been consistently hostile to radical regimes. The second was that US officials have in several cases attempted to come to terms with the early stages of revolution. Libya's Muammar al-Qaddafi in 1969-70 and Cuba's Fidel Castro in 1959-60 were presented as cases in which the United States initially attempted to establish good relations with new governments despite their radicalism. Despite this disagreement supporters of both views agreed that Washington is too impatient and that the failure of administrations of both parties to consolidate a relationship with a radical regime can be traced, in part at least, to too little trust in a policy initiative to stick with it through setbacks.

The Soviet Union as an Important Factor

Although total accord was not reached on the historical record, all participants did agree that the most crucial determinant of US reaction to a given radical regime is Washington's evaluation of that government's foreign policies and, in particular, the radical state's position in relation to the Soviet Union. The United States can live with unpalatable internal policies such as hostility to religion and private property, as one participant phrased it, but is not comfortable with a regime having a close relationship with Moscow. More people go to church now in Angola

Much discussion centered on past US policy. (Clark)

than they did before the present government took power, it was argued, and US and other Western companies operate profitably there. Yet, the United States is providing military aid to antigovernment freedom fighters in that country primarily because of its relationship with the Soviet Union and Cuba.

In this connection it was suggested that the United States occasionally responds to radical programs concerning internal affairs of a given country in a way that actually creates or strengthens links with the Soviet Union. In effect, US policy can nudge radical states into pro-Soviet states when the transition might not otherwise have been made. Conversely, the reduction of the Soviet connection has been the key to improving relations. Some radical governments with which the United States has established good relations, such as China and Yugoslavia, had previously ended their special relationship with the Soviet Union.

In evaluating a radical state's foreign policy, the United States is particularly concerned with the regional environment. If the new regime represents a threat to a US ally or to a regional balance that favors US interests, Washington is likely to respond negatively. In the Middle East, for example, a government's aggressive posture toward Israel increases the chances of US enmity. In the case of Cuba, it is Castro's perceived designs on Latin America and the Caribbean that arouses particular US concern.

The problem of radical states disrupting their regions and thereby arousing US hostility was seen by some participants as a predictable, but temporary, phase. Victorious revolutions, it was argued, inevitably want to share their "good fortune" with neighbors, but they usually outgrow this impulse as the revolution matures. The suggestion was also made, but not unanimously supported, that radical governments can sometimes trigger US animosity by providing a model for other states, without themselves actively seeking to export their revolution.

An interesting twist was introduced to the argument that it is a radical state's relationship with Moscow that determines US policy. Both the United States and the Soviet Union are wary today of competitive situations that could escalate into direct superpower confrontation. This explains, it was suggested, why Washington is inclined to choose as targets for demonstrations of our unwillingness to tolerate Soviet meddling those radical states that have a new or tenuous link with the Soviet Union. The United States intervenes militarily in Grenada, for example, rather than Cuba and in Libya rather than Syria. This risks sending an unintended message to new radical regimes: If you are going to have any close relationship with the Soviet Union, it must be sufficiently close to raise the possibility that Moscow might retaliate if you are attacked.

US Political Culture

In discussing ways in which the United States could have approached certain radical states differently, the participants found themselves repeatedly confronting the problem of the US political culture. Despite the diverse roots of the US body politic, it was argued, the US political culture is uniquely homogeneous and is much less exposed to "alien" ways than are European cultures. Americans distrust unfamiliar political systems. The political culture is also conditioned by the fact that the United States has been the most powerful world force for a number of years, and its citizenry are accustomed to thinking that might makes right. The bipolar structure of the international system has fostered a US tendency to categorize states as "with us" or "with them," in black or white boxes with no room for grays. The development of superpower competition has made Washington more defensive, exemplified by a concern that any concession to an opponent will result in loss of credibility and consequently "a gain for the other side."

The US political culture was also characterized as shortsighted and impatient, possibly because decisionmakers face elections so frequently. The desire to cater to public sentiment often leads to improvised and contradictory policies. Decisions are taken to please this or that domestic group, in a haphazard and ad hoc manner. Domestic political concerns further encourage candidates to rally support by

"finding a Communist to thump," exacerbating the "us" and "them" oversimplification.

Some participants took the position that US political culture is so entrenched by reason of its base in deep-rooted fears of the unknown that it will act as an almost immovable barrier against any new approach to radical governments. Only a major disaster that graphically illustrates the cost of pursuing the culturally dictated policy, such as the war in Vietnam, creates some possibility for accelerated cultural evolution. Even so, the new consensus is likely to be limited by the factors that remain entrenched.

Another school of thought held that the political culture, while extremely important, is not insurmountable. Indeed, leaders sometimes use symbols and themes from the political culture to justify policies they have decided on for other reasons. If anticommunism and distrust of all things foreign completely determined policy, it was asked, how did Richard Nixon manage to get the US public so enthusiastic about rapprochement with China? How does one explain the fact that the Soviet Union moved from being a pre-World War II adversary, if not enemy, to being a wartime ally, and then, within a few months, an enemy again? These sequences, it was suggested, demonstrate that Americans do respond to persuasive leadership and are not destined to reflexive positions determined by political culture. Indeed, one of the most important recent decisions on policy toward radical states – to aid the Nicaraguan contras – did not come from any groundswell of popular demand for the overthrow of the Sandinistas. In fact, the US public was uneasy with the decision. By playing on selected elements of the political culture, the Reagan administration was able to gain support for its policy. On balance, it was this latter assessment that received the most support, with differences remaining on the degree to which US political culture is malleable.

One of the major problems with the political culture factor, it was agreed, is that the elements of the US foreign policy elite most likely to understand the dynamics of a given radical regime and envisage a creative strategy for dealing with it neither respect nor really understand US political culture. Even the most creative policy can backfire once it becomes public if it is shaped by officials who tend to think of Americans as irrational and are thus inclined to work outside the public eye.

Other Approaches

The point was made that Europeans are far less prone to put governments into the "us" or "them" boxes, less obsessed with drawing lines between good guys and bad guys. Their view is long-term, and more accepting of the possibility that today's radical could well be tomorrow's moderate. Doors are seldom completely closed against any regime; their

long-term record in dealing with (and moderating) radical regimes is markedly better than that of the United States.

Several explanations were offered for this difference between the US and European approaches. First, it may be a result of Europe's colonial history, small domestic markets, the consequent need to export products to distant countries, and the resulting experience in dealing with diverse cultures and governments. Economic necessity encouraged Europe to adopt pragmatic approaches to regimes of all persuasions, including those going through what may be a temporary, radical phase. As a result of the large size of the domestic US market, foreign export activities and associated exposure to foreign political systems came much later for the United States.

Second, the European approach may also stem from the fact that many European countries have indigenous radical movements, such as the Communist parties in Italy and France, and the general populace has learned to live with people espousing such ideas in their midst.

A third explanation is based on Europe's relative lack of power. The stronger a country is, the more it seems to be preoccupied with the ideology of other countries and the more worried it is about losing prestige in the eyes of the world. Thus Britain, when it was the major world power, used the same language on both these concerns that the United States now employs. It is when a state has declined to the third or fourth rung

Lively conversation concerned the effect of US political culture on policy making. (Clough, Feinberg)

in the power ladder that it can have "the luxury of irresponsibility." It can enjoy cordial, financially profitable relations with a radical regime, knowing that if the radicalism starts to threaten the world order it can rely upon the dominant power to set things right. European policy on Libya was highlighted as an example.

The attitude of the US business sector was also presented as relatively free from the "us" and "them" oversimplification. Business is able to deal with regimes of virtually any political stripe as long as they pay their bills and respect contract rules. Some participants protested that while this was currently true in countries such as Angola, it certainly was not the case in Guatemala in 1954 when the US decision to aid the overthrow of the Arbenz government was influenced by US companies with investments in that country.

An explanation was offered of the above discrepancy: In the 1950s and 1960s radical governments tended to have a much more aggressive attitude towards international business, often implementing confiscatory and punitive measures. As radical leaders in power, or fighting for power, saw the economic results of these decisions, they lost enthusiasm for such policies. In the latter half of the 1970s, while still maintaining their fiery rhetoric, they began to take a much more respectful attitude in practice toward international business. The shift might also be partly because many recent revolutions have occurred in small countries with few resources, which makes them less attractive to foreign business and therefore not in a position to drive hard bargains. Whatever the reason, many businessmen recognized the change, realized they could still make money in countries taken over by this type of radical regime, and became more willing to deal with them. Those sectors of the business community which have not adopted the new attitude may not have been exposed to the pragmatic radical regimes, it was argued.

A connection was drawn between the business sector's approach and that of European countries. It was suggested that in many other countries, such as France, business and government conceive of themselves as allies and reinforce each other's pragmatic approach to radicals. The alliance is based on the fact that in Europe many companies would not survive without government subsidies. In the United States, on the other hand, the corporate sector generally sees the government as an adversary, and one of business's goals is to elude as much governmental interference as possible. The adversarial relationship makes it more difficult for sophisticated companies to influence foreign policy debates.

Comparative Case Studies

Many of the above characteristics of past US policy on radical regimes were illustrated in the case study discussions.

Cuba and China

"Cuba has the same effect on the United States that the full moon has on werewolves" and "Cuba is to America what China is to the Soviet Union" were two phrases that the participants agreed summarized US attitudes toward Castro's regime. It was suggested that this hypersensitivity arose because the United States expected Cuba to resemble itself. The penetration of US culture into Cuba before the revolution and the United States' role in Cuba's struggle for independence from Spain led Washington to assume that Cuba would forever model itself after the United States. When Castro not only rejected the model but also jeered at it for twenty-seven years, Washington reacted extremely negatively. The emotions generated by the sense of Cuban betrayal, the participants agreed, have influenced US policy not only in the Caribbean but also elsewhere in the world where Cuba has taken an interest.

The participants generally agreed that the United States did not drive Cuba into the Soviet camp and that Castro made up his mind independently to move in that direction. The main opportunity for the United States to forestall radicalism in Cuba came in 1958, before Castro marched on Havana, but was not recognized by Washington. It was also suggested that if the United States had not taken so hard a line in reaction to Castro's early adventurism but had treated it as a symptom of the fervor that all radicals must work out of their systems, prospects for better relations would be much greater.

A view was expressed that differences between the United States and Cuba are inevitable but that a potential for lessening tension has long existed and that Washington has missed several opportunities for improving relations. For example, the United States says that Cuba is one of the principal sources of Central America's problems, but when Castro says he wants to discuss this matter, the United States refuses.

It was also argued that US popular opinion is not the main barrier preventing rapprochement with Cuba. President Jimmy Carter broached the subject of reconciliation without facing a domestic political backlash. Instead, it was suggested, attitudes within the political establishment are a major factor militating against improved relations.

Concerning the future, several participants proposed that it is still in the United States' interest to improve relations with Cuba, though only limited movement may be possible. The next few years could be especially opportune. Cuba's foreign policy has recently become more cautious. Whereas in the 1960s Castro was calling for "many Vietnams," he now supports detente, is less irrational about the United States, and seems ready to reach an accommodation on certain issues on mutually beneficial terms. Any move toward improved relations needs to be made before Castro dies or retires, it was argued, because power in

post-Castro Havana is likely to be diffused and decision making slowed. It was also pointed out that as long as Washington continues to insist on a break with the Soviet Union as the price for improved relations with the United States, rapprochement will be very difficult.

One of the major obstacles to improving relations in the near future is the Reagan administration's belief that the blockade against Cuba "bleeds" the Soviet Union economically and that increasing US trade with Cuba would reduce this burden on Moscow. The participants agreed that the Soviet Union would probably be quietly pleased if US-Cuban relations were to warm. It was also suggested, however, that Castro would be careful not to get too close to the United States economically lest exposure to US culture "undermine the revolution." Therefore, any feasible improvement in US-Cuban economic relations would probably only minimally reduce the economic burden on Moscow.

In contrast with the Cuban experience, China was addressed as an example of a radical regime with which the United States has come to terms. It was pointed out that opportunities for improving US relations with China began to emerge at the time of Beijing's 1955 split with Moscow. The United States only recognized the opportunity in 1969, fourteen years later, but from then on Washington acted fairly quickly.

Tracing the history of the relationship, an Asia specialist recalled that the foreign policy elite in Washington initially perceived the 1949 Maoist takeover as a victory by nationalists and believed that the United States would be able to deal with the new government. The growth of McCarthyism, however, prevented Washington from acting on this guidance. The preoccupation with China's communism also blinded Washington to the recognition that China was most afraid of Japan and that Beijing feared that the United States, in the wake of its World War II victory over Tokyo, would replace Japan as the major threat in the Far East.

A major difference between the Chinese and Cuban cases, it was argued, was that early on China began to realize that the United States was not, in fact, a threat. The firing of MacArthur and Eisenhower's moves to restrain Chiang Kai-shek were particularly reassuring to Beijing, which subsequently felt free to turn to Washington as its differences with Moscow grew. Castro's Cuba, on the other hand, always viewed the United States as a threat, and indeed, the possibility of US aggression became an important tenet of Cuban domestic politics. Another difference between the two cases concerns size. China's huge territory and population enabled it to play one superpower off against another while Cuba's small size and population made such a tactic unworkable.

Libya and Algeria

The discussion of these two North African countries began with a re-

view of common denominators in their histories. Both countries were Roman colonies; both were colonized by European states between 1830 and 1911; neither existed as an independent entity within its present borders before World War II; both gained their independence after that war; both had a weak sense of their own identity immediately after independence; both are Sunni Moslem; both are viewed as radical today; and neither is a Soviet client, though both have good relations with Moscow and buy Soviet arms for cash.

Yet despite these shared experiences, it was noted, the two countries differ from each other in important respects. Libya received its independence peacefully through the United Nations, while Algeria gained sovereignty from France only after a long and bloody war. At independence Algeria had a sizeable population and considerable agricultural land. Today it has a technological elite, socialist ideals (but without Marxist-Leninist rhetoric), and one-man rule within a context of collegial leadership. Libya, in contrast, came to independence very weak economically. It had little agricultural land, its population was small, and it major exports were World War II scrap, esparto grass, and cuttlefish bones. After Qaddafi came to power in 1969, an ideology was embraced calling for a "third way" and eradication of exploitation, and a form of one-man rule lacking the balancing force of collegial leadership emerged. For purposes of conference analysis, the most important difference is that the United States has relatively cordial relations with Algeria and hostile relations with Libya.

A participant recalled that Algeria was the source of much anti-US rhetoric in the early post independence period and even today only one other country votes "against" the United States in the United Nations more often than Algeria. Yet Algeria's major export market is the United States, and Algeria is permitted to buy US arms. Though the currently cordial relations are partly because the present head of state, Chadli Bendjedid, is less concerned with ideology than was his predecessor Boumediene (whom he replaced after the latter's death in late 1978), participants noted that relations were not too bad even before the change in leadership.

Regional experts at the conference pointed out that US relations with Algeria have been intermittently strained over the years by that state's support for the Polisario guerrilla movement, which seeks to wrest the Western (formerly Spanish) Sahara from the control of Morocco, a proven friend of successive Washington administrations. The consensus was that Bendjedid seems less enthusiastic about supporting the Polisario than was Boumediene, and this source of tension with the United States may be subsiding. The Algerian government's role in the negotiations to attain release of US hostages in Iran in 1980-81 was also cited as a significant factor.

When Qaddafi came to power in 1969, it was suggested, he began as a conventional Arab nationalist, yet he ended up restructuring Libya's society in a way that had happened nowhere else. The wealthy were dispossessed, private employers were allowed no more than three workers, and each person was limited to ownership of one house. Religion was disestablished, the parliamentary system was denounced, and government by committee was declared the only true democracy.

The participants concluded, however, that it was Qaddafi's actions outside his own borders that are the principal source of US concern. Regional experts reported that initially the United States made an effort to get along with Qaddafi, but the policy broke down as his government was increasingly implicated in terrorism. Libya's alleged intention to encourage the establishment of a Muslim empire in the Sahel and his combative stance regarding Israel also guaranteed US hostility.

The question facing the US government for the past seventeen years was whether it should ignore Qaddafi or try to "do something" about him. President Carter took some steps towards accommodation, it was noted, while President Reagan has adopted a consistently confrontational stance. The consensus appeared to be that Qaddafi would have become a less important world actor if the United States had not focused so much public attention and rhetoric on his behavior.

It was generally accepted that the cases of Algeria and Libya demonstrate that a radical regime's open and persistent support for terrorism absolutely guarantees US hostility while socialist domestic policies and a modest degree of regionally destabilizing behavior may be tolerated, especially if the state pursuing such policies is willing to use its influence on behalf of Washington in a crisis.

Mossadeq and Khomeini

Muhammad Mossadeq was Iran's prime minister from 1951 to 1953. He challenged the power of the Shah (an important US client), upset Western business interests by pursuing the nationalization of Iran's oil industry, and was ultimately overthrown by supporters of the Shah (who received important covert assistance from the United States in doing so). Regional experts at the conference described Mossadeq as a well-educated, secular nationalist who believed that Iran's various linguistic communities could be pulled together into one nation. Though he received some support from Iran's Tudeh (communist) party, his ideology had more in common with the European social democratic tradition.

The case of Mossadeq was cited as an example of Washington's placing a radical label on a political figure for reasons that were only marginally related to his ideology. The regional experts said that Mossadeq

was anti-Soviet and pro-Western; he nationalized British oil interest but took no significant actions against the United States. Mossadeq's policies were never a major issue for the US public, and the decision to act against him was essentially made by the foreign policy establishment and encouraged by US oil interests. The participants agreed that if a Mossadeq were to appear on the political scene today, the United States probably would have a much more positive attitude toward him.

In contrast, Khomeini was described as a nonnationalist who envisages a new civilization based on the Islamic religion and has given marginal attention to Iran's economic development. Regional experts reported that the Tudeh party and its patron, the Soviet Union, initially supported Khomeini but lost enthusiasm as they recognized the role of religious fundamentalism in his philosophy, perceived its implications for the Islamic population of the Soviet Union, and realized that the regime represents the first new model for revolution since the Soviet Union's own upheaval in 1917.

Participants agreed that while in Mossadeq's case Washington mistook a moderate for a radical, in Khomeini's case it initially committed the reverse judgmental error. From Khomeini's takeover until the seizure of the US embassy, one participant reported, Washington believed it would be possible to do business with the Ayatollah.

Several case studies focused attention on the lack of consistent US policy. (Marcum)

The cases of Mossadeq and Khomeini illustrate two of the participants' earlier points. The hostile attitude of business toward Mossadeq and the agreement that the US approach would have been less alarmist had he emerged at a different point in history support the thesis that business has learned to deal with radicalism. The Khomeini case also supports the argument that the United States does sometimes give radical regimes the benefit of the doubt and that it is not always US actions that sour the relationship.

Nicaragua and Zimbabwe

Regional experts at the conference noted that in Zimbabwe's case early friendly relations with Washington eventually deteriorated and that the course of both developments sheds light on the issue of US relations with radical regimes. It was pointed out that the US foreign policy establishment's direct personal participation in the process that brought Zimbabwe to independence under Robert Mugabe in 1980 initially gave Washington a stake in the establishment of cordial relations with that regime. The perception that Mugabe defeated a "pro-Soviet" rival (Joshua Nkomo) also had a favorable impact on early US relations with Zimbabwe.

The participants noted that the decision of a significant number of white Zimbabwean businessmen not to leave the country when majority rule became a fact of life gave the Mugabe government a pluralist image. Since the United States believes that a strong business sector hinders the establishment of a client relationship with the Soviet Union, the Zimbabwean business sector's tenacity at first reinforced Washington's favorable view of the country.

There was a consensus that Zimbabwe's distance from the United States and the resultant low level of press coverage initially allowed decisions on that country to escape daily public scrutiny. All commentators concurred that one of the most important factors in the US-Zimbabwe relationship was that, although Mugabe used radical rhetoric, the policies he actually implemented did not reflect that rhetoric. For example, there was virtually no nationalization of the private sector of the economy.

Experts also pointed out that Mugabe's image in Washington was helped by the fact that all the surrounding states except South Africa had aided the independence process and welcomed the new government's rise to power.

All these factors, it was agreed, explain why Zimbabwe started off on a fairly good footing with the United States. Then why, participants asked, did the relationship deteriorate? A number of reasons were proposed. Washington responded negatively to the increase in anti-US

rhetoric coming from Harare, even though it was not accompanied by substantive actions. In addition, Mugabe's new role as the 1986-89 chairman of the Nonaligned Movement caused strain because of Washington's resentment of that movement's reluctance to condemn the Soviet Union.

It was suggested that early State Department overselling of Mugabe was also partly responsible. Fearing congressional hostility to the idea of aiding Zimbabwe, the State Department understated some of Zimbabwe's less attractive characteristics. When the US-Zimbabwe relationship became subject to more scrutiny, this overselling became apparent and exacerbated latent tensions.

Several participants pointed out that Zimbabwe's attitude toward the United States also changed in response to Pretoria's aggression against its neighbors and the US policy of "constructive engagement." The rhetoric adopted by the Mugabe government as it came to believe the United States was in alliance with its main enemy contributed to the deterioration of the relationship.

Nicaragua was presented as a contrasting case. There, regional experts reported, the United States backed the losing force, and no decisionmakers had a personal interest in making the relationship with the new regime work. The fact that Cuba was in contact with the Sandinistas before they came to power and increased cooperation immediately afterward also soured Managua's relationship with Washington. Unlike the case in Zimbabwe, Nicaragua's business community largely fled to the United States, removing an important element of the pluralist image. The Sandinistas' negative attitude toward the Catholic Church further alienated US observers.

In contrast to the largely supportive southern African environment in which Mugabe emerged, the regional situation facing the Sandinistas was thoroughly hostile. The new leaders' belief that the United States would mount a counter revolution led them to assume they could only consolidate power by creating "more Nicaraguas." This resulted in Sandinista support for El Salvadoran rebels, which in turn guaranteed even more US enmity. Nicaragua's geographic proximity to the United States made it impossible to conduct quiet diplomacy in pursuit of improved relations.

The cases of Nicaragua and Zimbabwe supported several of the theses mentioned in the earlier discussion and suggested a new one. These cases highlighted the already noted imortance of regional environment, geographical proximity, the nature of a regime's relationship with Cuba and/or the Soviet Union, and the regime's attitude toward religion. The views of the indigenous (as opposed to foreign) business sector was introduced as a new factor influencing US decisions. Also, the fact

that relations with Zimbabwe have deteriorated, even after the good start, shows how rhetoric and a violent regional situation can affect US relations with a radical state.

Angola and Mozambique

Angola's ruling Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (MPLA) party was presented by experts as an example of a mass-based party with socialist inclinations (and a few Marxists) but no firm ideology that is being radicalized by US actions. Soviet aid to the MPLA, the participants were told, was cut off a month before the Portuguese coup that opened a new phase in the struggle between contending factions. One of the MPLA leaders was reported to have claimed that US actions during that period compressed ten years of radicalization into two months.

The US role in Angola in 1975-76 was analyzed in depth. The consensus was that the US decision to aid two organizations opposing the MPLA was made without careful thought. Overconcern about maintaining credibility with Washington's new allies in Beijing, who were opposing the MPLA, also skewed the decision-making process.

It was further suggested that Soviet support for Nito Alves's 1977 attempt to overthrow Angola's President Agostinho Neto, and the MPLA's consequent distrust of Moscow, gave the United States an opportunity to turn the situation in Angola to its own advantage, but Washington did not take note of this opening. Continuing tensions between Luanda and Moscow currently provide similar, though less dramatic, opportunities, and Washington still fails to act on them.

Concerning present relations with Angola, the participants agreed that it is the presence of Cuban troops that militates against the United States seeking a more harmonious relationship with the MPLA. The MPLA is reluctant to dispense with their services as long as it feels threatened by South Africa and Washington is unlikely to retract its demand that the troops withdraw. The United States' unwillingness to establish diplomatic relations with Angola until an agreement is reached on Cuban troop withdrawal was also cited as a factor hindering communication, for it results in neither country having diplomats permanently stationed in the other's capital.

The participants agreed that Angola is a case in which the US business sector, specifically the oil companies and banks, have a good relationship with the government while relations at the governmental level remain shaky. Some participants suggested that Angola is a good example for the argument that relations with a radical state need not be a Washington-Moscow zero-sum game. US companies can make money from the oil and financial agreements, and the Soviet Union can sell its arms.

The case of Angola was contrasted with that of Mozambique. Several factors were described as contributing to the less antagonistic, albeit uneven, US relationship with the socialist Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique (FRELIMO) government which took power in 1975. The United States was influenced by the decision of the region's strongest power, South Africa, not to directly intervene. And in the same way that the US attitude toward the MPLA was affected by Chinese hostility to that party, US overtures to FRELIMO were encouraged by Chinese support for that organization.

Another important difference between the Angolan and Mozambican cases was that FRELIMO faced no rival liberation movement before the Portuguese coup. Thus when independence arrived, there was little competition for power, and outside forces had less opportunity to intervene. The absence of nationalist rivalries, combined with FRELIMO's close relationship with Beijing and relatively distant connection with the Soviet Union and Cuba, meant there was no desire on FRELIMO's part to introduce Cuban troops, a most important factor in US eyes.

Nevertheless, the US relationship with FRELIMO has not been consistently harmonious. In 1977 Mozambique signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union, possibly because it thought Soviet arms would help it withstand any South African intervention. Nationalization of private enterprise, actions against the church, and support for guerrillas fighting to overthrow white regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa generated further US unease. Relations reached their nadir in 1980 when several US diplomats were expelled after being accused of operating a CIA "spy ring."

The role of Mozambican President Samora Machel in helping achieve a Rhodesian settlement at Lancaster House in 1979 and his subsequent pragmatism both on economic policy (for example, 1983 liberalization of regulations) and on foreign policy (exemplified by the 1984 Nkomati nonaggression pact with South Africa) laid the groundwork for improved relations with the United States. The fact that Washington was involved in the negotiations leading to the Nkomati Accord, as it was in the Lancaster House negotiation, gave US diplomats a personal stake in maintaining the peace the Accord was supposed to produce.

The cases of Mozambique and Angola supported the participants previously discussed theory that it is a radical state's foreign policy which plays the most important role in determining US policy toward that regime. The fact that the Angolan and Mozambican governments implemented internal policies that were equally distasteful to the United States lends credence to the argument that it is the foreign policy issue which accounts for the major difference in these two states' relations with Washington.

Overview

From the discussion of case studies, the conference participants moved toward some generalized findings. Confrontation with all radical regimes is not inevitable, it was generally agreed, although in some cases it is extremely difficult for any US administration to avoid. The nature of the regime's foreign policy – specifically the regime's links with the Soviet Union and Cuba; its regional interactions; and its effect upon third parties, particularly through war or terrorism – is the most important factor in determining the relationship with the United States. If a given radical regime has an acceptable record on these issues (for example, China, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Algeria), other manifestations of radicalism, such as antireligion and antiprivate property policies, may be glossed over. However, if a regime has an unacceptable foreign policy record (for example, Angola, Libya, and Nicaragua), then internal radical practices will be highlighted and used to discredit it further. Even if such other practices do not exist, their absence will not help the radical government's image in the eyes of Washington.

Conclusions and Recommendations

If confrontation is not always inevitable or appropriate, then what can the United States do to be more selective? A number of suggestions emerged from the conference.

Political Culture

The measures most frequently mentioned were those touching upon political culture. There was broad support for the view that any alternative approach to radical regimes must take the US political culture factor more seriously. The culture should not be dismissed as naive, uninformed, rigid, and reflexive. Since the conclusion arising from the case studies is that it will be very difficult to change a policy on a given radical regime unless the link between that policy and a part of US political culture is undone, it follows that policymakers not fully tuned in to that culture will be poorly equipped to execute any uncoupling. Until a way is found to protect a congressman or official proposing such a change from the charge that he is soft on communism, opportunities for improving relations with radical regimes remain largely unexploitable.

Another comment about US political culture that received wide support was that it is more flexible and open to change than most observers realize, and policymakers should explore in greater depth this capacity for modification. Those seeking creative approaches to radical regimes will have to point out, and thereby possibly change, some of the assumptions of US political culture that no longer reflect reality.

Perhaps the most important assumption that no longer applies is that of the United States as a hegemonic power. Because Soviet power is now

approaching parity, the United States must realize that it cannot altogether exclude the Soviet Union from any section of the world, just as the Soviet Union cannot exclude the United States from any region. Once the United States no longer views itself as hegemonic, the relationship with the Soviet Union need no longer be seen as a zero-sum game.

Some participants suggested that once the Soviet Union is seen as a near-equal, policymakers can also put another aspect of US political culture to use. "Trading something you want for something I want" is a deeply ingrained aspect of US culture. Superiors usually do not make deals with inferiors, and as long as the United States views itself as the unchallenged power, deal making sits uncomfortably upon the US conscience. Once the United States sees the Soviet Union as a near equal, deal making should become acceptable. "Trading" will ease US relations with radical regimes, it was suggested, because Washington can ask for changes in the policies of a given radical regime connected with the Soviet Union in return for changes the Soviet Union wants in some other aspect of world affairs.

While the possibilities of deal making were considered worthy of exploration by all participants, some reservations were voiced. Deal making must take into account the interests of the people being "traded" if it is not to be sabotaged. In sum, deal making is a useful tool but not one applicable to all situations.

An element of US political culture that all participants agreed needs to be adjusted is the task-force mentality – the tendency to view events from a short-term perspective and to expect results overnight. The participants found it difficult to identify a strategy for modifying this characteristic. After an extended discussion of the shortcomings of the State Department's Policy Planning component in focusing on the long-range dimension, it was accepted as a fact of life that most secretaries of state are inclined to use their policy planners in day-to-day operations. Not since the term of George Kennan as chief of policy planning in the early postwar years has this assignment been perceived as future oriented and nonoperational.

Capitalize on Opportunities

The participants appeared to share the view that the Soviet Union's appeal to the Third World is decreasing. Its backing for liberation movements in the decolonization period had a special appeal to the Third World, but the Soviet Union has lost a competitive edge now that decolonization is virtually complete. In addition, Moscow has found that support for radical regimes involves economic and military obligations that cut across higher Soviet priorities – notably the modernization of the Soviet economy – that have taken precedence for the present over "exporting revolution." Participants noted that the Soviet Union gives few

The conference concluded with consideration of possible recommendations for future US policy. (Lewis)

radical governments (none in Africa) a higher classification than "socialist-orientated." This terminology was interpreted to imply that "the process" is "reversible" and that the Brezhnev doctrine does not apply. In other words, the Soviet Union will not necessarily intervene if a state of "socialist orientation" is threatened.

All these developments give the United States opportunities to reduce Soviet influence upon radical states and to improve those governments' relations with Washington. However, instead of using the mutual distrust between radical states and the Soviet Union to entice radicals toward the West, a portion of the US policymaking community is currently suggesting that the United States attack the radicals while the Soviet Union is relatively inward looking and so less likely to retaliate.

Central America was presented as an example of this approach. At first, regional experts pointed out, Central America was viewed by the policymakers as a target for Soviet expansionism, and it followed that the United States must take preventative action. Now some of those same policymakers say that the Soviet Union is reducing its support to the region, and therefore this is an excellent opportunity to remove the radical governments or force them to change without the fear of Soviet response. Participants agreed that the only way to counter the argument is to point out that such a policy creates more problems for the future,

but this requires that decision makers take a long-term view, a perspective not yet common.

Give More Attention to Views of the Radical Regimes

The proposal was made, and generally supported, that not enough attention has been paid to the situations and priorities of the regimes labelled as radical. It is in the US interest, it was suggested, for officials of radical regimes to have opportunities to gain understanding of US political culture, so as to be able to interact with Washington in ways that elicit a more constructive US response. Courses in US political culture for individuals from such countries would go some way in effecting this change.

Conversely, the US assumption that the US attitude is the most important element in a radical regime's environment is not only inaccurate but dangerously misleading when it comes to analyzing specific policy actions of those governments that arise from domestic or regional realities. Behavior or rhetoric that may seem contradictory, "anti-American," or "pro-Soviet" when viewed through a narrow prism can have a quite different meaning when examined at closer range.

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